

World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry – Canadian Chapter

Dear Assistant Director-General Alwan:

My name is Gwen Duda and I was a former art director for Global Television as well as Communications Assistant for the Heart and Stroke Foundation here in Canada but my career was completely derailed due to disabling ill health caused, in great part, by the mercury that was continually released from my dental amalgams that were first placed in my teeth at the tender age of 6. I currently reside in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and am undergoing the extraction of these poisonous fillings and am having them replaced with inert biocompatible and non-allergic dental filling material and my health is improving as a result.

The reason I am bothering you today with this is because I have been greatly bothered by "the Peterson Paper". Even though there is enough outstanding evidence of the severe negative health and environmental consequences of mercury (including that in dental mercury amalgams) and countries, including our own here in Canada, this paper does nothing to address this. Even in Canada back in 1996, 14 years ago, Health Canada directed that dentists stop placing amalgam in children, pregnant women, and those with kidney disease or mercury hypersensitivity. It was a great way to phase down amalgam use, and it benefited the most vulnerable consumers. With hearings by the Food & Drug Administration last week in Washington, it appears likely that the United States will be taking a similar step in limiting amalgam use.

If you read the Petersen Paper, you would never know about this common-sense phasedown step. The paper, written by pro-mercury dentists, claims to be for a phasedown, then refuses to talk seriously to the many common-sense steps for a phasedown, such as no amalgam for children and pregnant women. The Petersen Paper instead defends this archaic dental filling material which the trade groups, from which these authors come, will benefit. I am amazed that they are not also for the reinstatement of beaver felt hats for "innovative" fashion or Calomel, a teething powder for colicky babies (Calomel was a product that contained mercury that was a teething powder utilized in the 1940's-50's which caused "Pink disease" from which many children were made gravely ill and died before one brave physician blew the whistle on what was actually killing the children). I could go on with this comparison, adding how mercury was utilized by physicians for treating venereal disease up until the 20th century, but I think you get my point. It is THAT antiquated and strongly ill-advised.

The Petersen Paper says dentists have no duty to switch to mercury-free dentistry, and the fault lies with those who get cavities, such as children. However, I would argue, that they have EVERY duty to fulfill their noble ethical standards one of which is suppose to be to DO NO HARM, if I read those standards correctly. It is appearing that, indeed, what they are REALLY concerned with is that no harm be done to them financially, as individuals and a group and the health consequences to their patients' are of a secondary concern, or truly, no concern at all when it comes to continuing mercury ingestion and inhalation via mercury amalgam placement in their trusting patient's mouths and that they OFTEN do this without fully informing their patients as they SHOULD be doing or inquiring as to what their patient's health status is, which is, at the very least, negligent.

The credibility of the WHO is becoming an issue here. The past flu pandemic whistle that was blown by the WHO is now being heavily scrutinized for this decision by the equivalent medical and scientific peers, the media and the world citizenry. There has been a connection made between the pharmaceutical agencies, which stood to make great sales and profits from such a partnership, and certain individuals within the WHO. It is so vastly important that the WHO recovers from that with their integrity reinstated. I find that corporations and for-profit lobby groups seem to be having more and more influence with the WHO and that the WHO is in dire danger of losing their former hard-earned credibility. Truly, if this Peterson paper is allowed to go forward, with vehement protestations from those individuals and/or groups who participated but whose needed scientific data was subverted to meet a pro-amalgam stance, well then, so much for integrity of this area of the WHO and by connection, the WHO as a whole. Following on the heels of the H1N1 debacle, what will the media say this time if the Peterson paper is allowed to go forward in its inaccurate state?

I hope you value the integrity of WHO (I know I did and hopefully still will and there are many, many more like) over protecting a colleague who has put first the economic agenda of a trade group --- a trade group that has decided dentists' profits come before children's needs, a trade group which has turned its back to the need to decrease mercury use in this world and which has, as I mentioned earlier, subverted peer relevant data that was incongruous with the pro-amalgam stance, and made it pro-amalgam through that subversion. And truly, a colleague whose integrity has been compromised by ignorance, but none-the-less, has been compromised. It doesn't matter if it was done for money, malice or even a complete but erroneous belief in the goodness of dental mercury amalgams. I don't blame that colleague, but I won't accept it either, not with such overwhelming scientific, peer-reviewed evidence to the contrary. I hope neither will you.

Thank you for reading this and attending to this most grave matter.

Sincerely and Respectfully Yours,

Gwen Duda, Director, Canadian Chapter, World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry